

Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

February 11, 2022

Via zoom and located at the Nebraska Department of Education, 500 S. 84th Street, Room D, Lincoln, NE 9:00a.m.

Council members present: Anthony, Borchert, Bowen, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Nunemaker, Ottoson, Robinson, Thompson, Vint, Wilson

Council members excused: Jara, Larson

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Eleanor Shirley; Co-Facilitator, Mary Phillips; Council Secretary, Karen Hoffman; Technical Assistants, Auman, Brehm, Cimino, Cromer, Feser, Frost, Johnson, Renn, Shockley and Texel; guest presenters: Shannon Mitchell-Boekstal and Greg Welch

This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:00 a.m. Public notification of the meeting was on the Nebraska Department of Education website and in the Omaha World Herald. The Public Meetings Notice was available online and onsite at the Department of Education, Conference room D. Presentation materials may be found in this [GoogleDocs](#) folder.

Council Meeting Convenes

ECICC Chair, Dr. Karla Lester, convened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and members were asked to introduce themselves and share a self-care tip.

***Approval of minutes – November 19, 2021**

Motion made by Thompson and seconded by Marinovich to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2021, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 11-yes, 3-abstain, 0-no

Yes: Anthony, Bowen, Bunnell, Hobson, Lester, Marinovich, Nunemaker, Ottoson, Thompson, Vint, Wilson

Abstain: Borchert, Knust, Robinson

**** Public Comment, Announcements, Upcoming Events**

Mary asked if there were any announcements for the good of the group. There were none.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator, Children & Family Services, DHHS, shared an update about the Child Care Stabilization Grant, including a website link to an interactive map that details providers that have been awarded funds to date. This grant is part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act and includes payments to qualifying child care programs. Overall, 1,997 child care providers have been awarded over \$90 million dollars. Payments are being sent out in two batches, totaling \$45 million was sent out on December 17, 2021. The second payment is slated for March 2022. A second round application will be made available, in Spring 2022, for child care providers who did not apply or who were not eligible for the first round application. ECICC Technical Assistant, Beckie Cromer, encouraged providers to the Deloitte contact center at 1-833-500-8810 with grant questions. Deloitte, the company assisting with the Stabilization Grant Program. Link to Child Care Stabilization Grant information: <https://coronavirus.nebraska.gov/childcare>. A Child Care Spend Plan was presented to the Governor, DHHS is working on providing follow up to the Governor's questions at the meeting. Once the spend plan is approved, additional funds will be invested in the Nebraska child care landscape. A question was asked whether there is any overlap between these dollars and efforts with those in proposed Nebraska Legislative Bill 1203, which would appropriate federal funds for child care programs. Nicole replied there is some overlap with what DHHS has proposed to the Governor. Nicole can be reached at nicole.vint@nebraska.gov.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Update

Shannon Mitchell-Boekstal, Assistant Vice President at Nebraska Children & Families Foundation and Early Childhood/PDG Program Manager, shared a powerpoint that reviewed the status and goals of the PDG. Efforts are ongoing to seek out the voices of those not yet represented in this work of building capacity at the state and local levels for quality child care in Nebraska. Shannon also mentioned a virtual Family Engagement Group event scheduled for October 22, 2022, that will empower parents to be advocates and leaders in their communities. Stipends will be given to participating families. Those interested in the conference, and/or in having an advisory role in PDG activities can contact Mariana Munoz de Schell at mmunozdeshell@nebraskachildren.org. Shannon can be reached at sboekstal@nebraskachildren.org.

Market Rate Survey Update

Greg Welch, Associate Director of Research & Evaluation, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, introduced Alexandra Daro, Research Specialist with Institute, who shared the purpose and goal of their work and a “2023 Market Rate Survey” powerpoint. This year’s goal includes implanting a more hybrid approach that adds cost of care. New information is gleaned from the survey each year and outreach made to participants who completed it. A recent meeting with providers proved very fruitful and provided helpful feedback that Alex said will strengthen this year’s survey. This is the first year the survey and related materials are being offered in Spanish, which will provide a helpful data point. The survey is being sent via postcard and email, with Spanish support provided. Alex detailed how the findings will be shared and the timeline used, including a June 30th date for initial Report of Findings being provided to DHHS. Questions or input can be sent to Alex and Greg at their respective email addresses, adaro@nebraska.edu and gwelch@nebraska.edu.

Early Childhood Update

Melody Hobson, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Early Childhood Administrator, shared about the Early Childhood Program Grants available to public schools that go out in November for new or expanding programs. The application deadline was the first of February, and 19 were received, two of which were new with the rest being for expansion activities for existing programs. Once State Aid is certified in April, more will be known about possible funding for these applicants. Kristine Luebbe, Director of Early Childhood Programs and Partnerships at NDE, is in the grant review process, and Melody encouraged anyone wishing to assist Kristine to reach out via email at kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov. Regarding Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant dollars, Melody said there is consideration being given to funding some Early Childhood and Educational Services Unit efforts targeting activities for children aged 3 to third grade. Regional needs and funding areas are being looked at, and approval to open an RFP to fund the grants will be considered at the March State Board meeting. Melody can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraska.gov.

Head Start Update

Steph Knust, attending her first ECICC meeting as the new Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, shared a powerpoint with the group that included policy updates for the Head Start community. Vaccine and masking rules, as they relate to Head Start and Early Head Start programs, are currently in litigation. Some changes to Federal Rules relating to Head Start Program Performance Standards have just gone into effect. A slide showed current funding for the FY 2021 and FY 2022 that included a proposed increase for Head Start. However, current funding levels are being held in place without any interruption anticipated as long as there is no Government shutdown. While “Build Back Better” legislation includes workforce supports and expansion dollars for Head Start, all is on hold at the current time. Steph also shared some Covid-19 Relief Appropriation dollars details, and that Federal Head Start Monitoring that began in January has some Nebraska programs on the schedule. She concluded by sharing a slide with some training and technical assistance resources. Steph can be reached at steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Part C Update

Amy Bunnell, NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor, and Early Development Network (NDE) Program Coordinator, shared a powerpoint that detailed the FY 2020 Annual Performance Report (APR). She reminded the group that data for this Federally required annual report was reviewed at the November ECICC meeting. Once the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) accepts and approves the report, a link will be placed on the NDE website and to the Council. Nebraska typically receives approximately \$3 million beginning July 1 of each year, and a number of slides detailed how Nebraska's Part C funds are used and what partners and programs they support. Amy encouraged the group to email either her or Jessica Anthony any questions at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov, and jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov.

Governor's Biennial Report (2020-2022)

While ECICC Co-Facilitator, Mary Phillips, shared her screen with the group, Eleanor shared information about a federal technical assistance organization, WestEd, that collaborates with State Interagency Coordinating Councils (SICC) and provides webinars and develops resources that support the activities of state ICCs. The website for WestEd is: WestEd.org.

Given the challenges of Covid, the 2018-20 Biennial Report has been delayed. The plan is to obtain and update the original files for the 2016-18 report with information especially relevant to how Covid has affected the Early Childhood Care and Education world. Mary took the group, page-by-page, through the last report highlighting areas needing to be updated as well as who would complete it. Feedback and updates are being requested by March 1 (tentative) in order for there to be a draft ready for the Council's final review and approval at the May 6 ECICC meeting. It was emphasized that those providing updates should consider how Covid has impacted their respective area. Programs have been greatly impacted, and these stories are important and worthy of sharing. Send report content updates to Eleanor at diallogic.dimensions@gmail.com. She may also be reached at 402-981-1071 with questions.

***Ad Hoc Membership/Recruitment Committee**

An effort to address membership vacancies and recruitment challenges by creating an Ad Hoc Committee was discussed and voted on at the November meeting. Dr. Paula Thompson, ECCIC Vice-Chair, shared that a subsequent meeting was had that included Paula, Karla Lester and Connie Shockley, and an ECICC Membership Recruitment Ad Hoc Committee Proposal created. It was emailed out prior to today's meeting. The scope is to look at strategies and processes for recruitment. Paula asked for approval of the scope as well as two-to-three additional members and a chair for the group. It was noted that, while they were both unable to attend today, ECICC parent representatives, Amber Jara and Krynne Larsen, both expressed an interest in being a part of the Ad Hoc committee. Mary and Eleanor will provide TA support to the work and the committee will elect its own Chair and Vice-Chair. Those two roles must be voting members.

A motion was made by Hobson and seconded by Knust to adopt the Membership/Recruitment Ad Hoc Committee document. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 12-yes, 0-no

Yes: Anthony, Borchert, Bowen, Bunnell, Easter, Hobson, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Ottoson, Robinson, Thompson, Vint

May Meeting Components

The group was asked for input for the May meeting agenda. In addition to the usual Agency updates and those regarding the Governor's Biennial Report and the Ad Hoc Committee, responses included:

- Requesting a presentation from Brian Wojcik of Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
- ECICC new member orientation discussion

-Requesting a presentation about high levels of lead drinking water found recently and reported about in Nebraska child care centers and preschools, and what possible funding sources may be utilized to address them.

-With there now being an opportunity for Mental Health providers to obtain a Infant Mental Health Endorsement (IMH-E), it was noted that an April 6, 2022 virtual event is happening, and a presentation to learn more would be sought.

Other – Adjournment

It was noted that the May 6th meeting is scheduled to be in-person at the Jack Huck Continuing Education Center at 301 S. 68th Street Place here in Lincoln. No other business or comments were shared, and the meeting adjourned at 11:35a.m.